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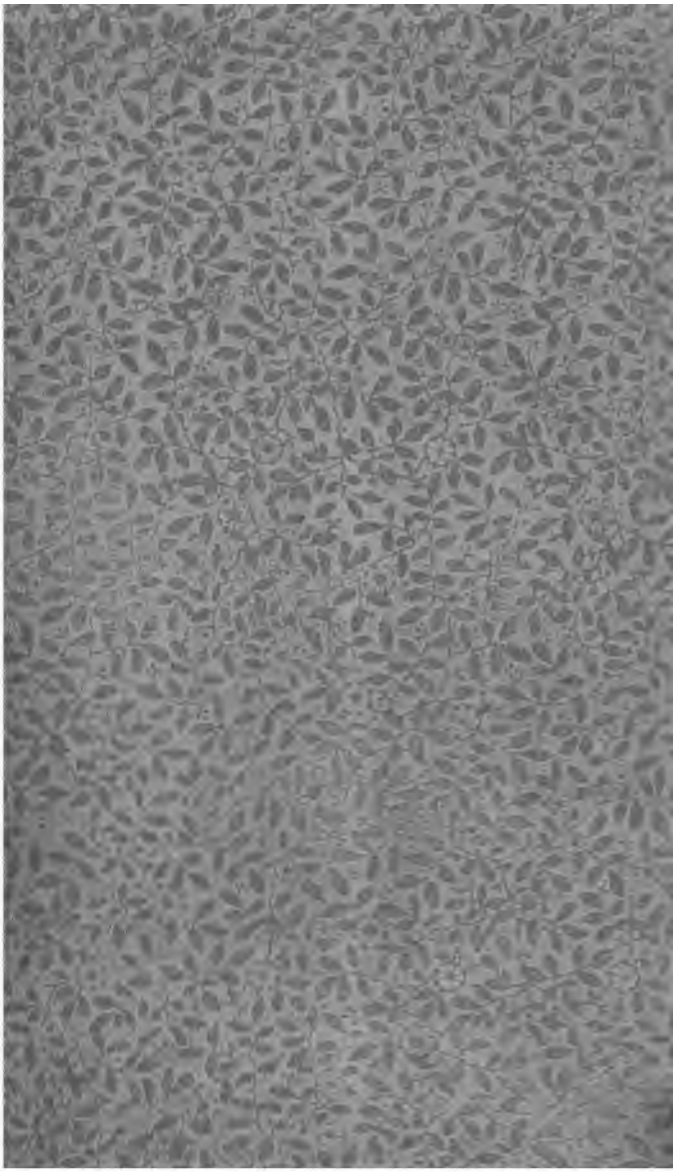
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THE
GUARDIAN AN
AND OTHER POE
G.F. DE TEISSIE



The Guardian Angel,

And Other Poems.

BY THE REV.

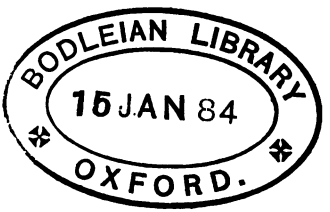
G. F. DE TEISSIER, B.D.,

AUTHOR OF 'PAROCHIAL SKETCHES AND OTHER VERSES.'

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1884.


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The Guardian Angel,

And Other Poems.

The Guardian Angel,

AND

Other Poems.

The Guardian Angel.

WHO is my Guardian Angel? By what name
Might I address him? Hath he power, or fame,
Among th' undying myriads of the sky,
That worship round the rainbow-circled throne
Of Him, who sits on high,
In all His vast creations, eternal and alone?

O hòly watcher, coming ever near,
Yet still withdrawn: whose voice I cannot hear,
Nor see the amber splendours of thy wing—
If wing thou hast—or vesture bathed in light;
Thou art a servant of "my Lord the King"—
Not less than I—nay more, because so bright
In all th' unfallen beauty of thy heavenly might!

I may not worship thee:—Yet may I speak
To call thee "fellow servant"—I so weak!—

Thou mighty to sustain my faltering feet;
Or kind to breathe, perchance, some memory sweet
Into my listening heart:
Or else to warn against the traitor's part,
And check the deed of shame, or soothe chill sorrow's smart!—

Art thou among those holy ones who walk'd
In Eden erst, and with our parents talk'd,
Adam and Eve, before th' unguarded eye
First led them from their God to stray,
And in forbidden pleasure to descry
Good, that for evil since has open'd wide the way?

Or art thou one, that on their watch by night
Sang in the shepherds' ear the hymn of glory,
What time the Blessed Maiden gave to sight
The Wondrous Child; on whose unfailing story
Of life and death hang still the hearts of men,
Beloved as dearly now as dearly honoured then?

Or didst thou gaze in awful silent wonder
When the dread garden's agony broke asunder
The sacred threads of that dear faultless frame,
Which did encase the sorrow-stricken soul
Of God's own Son by nature as by name;

And thrust a world's huge grief from pole to pole
Into one human heart to take and bear the whole?

Or didst thou on that first day of the week
Forbid the troubled seekers of their Lord
Among the dead the "Living One" to seek,
Slow-minded in the comfort of His word
How ere the third sun should have run his race,
They would behold again their Risen Saviour's face?

Or didst thou smite the sleeping Peter's side,
And through the bolted prison noiseless glide,
With the freed captive following dreamily?—
Or didst thou, 'mid the wreck of skies and sea,
Stand on the batter'd vessel, freighted high
With souls of men; and there, of all unheard
Save one brave mission-bearer, speak the word
"Fear not: another work awaits thee still
God's plan of mercy to fulfil,
And other deaths these souls, than that they think to fly"?

Or didst thou wake that drowsy Celebrant
Where Ambrose lay entranced in coming death?
Or waft the utterance of some childish breath

To great Augustine "Take the book and ponder"
Till changed in all his thoughts to solemn wonder
He heard in other realms the mighty chant
Sung o'er the healing waters of new birth?
Then rose he in his musings high from earth,
And sought to measure heaven's eternal worth,
Till on his wakeful eye there fell
A visionary spell,—
Perchance 'twas thine—as on the briny shore
A little boy his bootless art was plying,
And with a scallop-shell the great sea trying
Into his narrow scoopèd hole to pour.

Or didst thou sit with Jerome's solitude
By penance long and fastings unsubdued?
Or tame the wounded lion at his feet
To wait his biddings in subservience meet?
Or smoothe the hardness of his bed,
And lull the throbbings of his weary head.
After long pain of studies dear and sweet?—

Or didst thou quell the blazing faggot's pile,
And teach one strong in weakness to beguile
The anguish of that hand to flames consign'd
Which acted traitor to his better mind?—
O great archbishop, hardly now thy deed
In days degenerate since, can have the meed

Of human praise? Rest in thine ashes, thou,
And those that with thee lit the torch of truth,
And wrought the work thro' welfare and thro' ruth,
Which made our England then, and makes our England now!

But thou, my Guardian Angel, whom to love
As man loves man doth fall not unto blame,
Who art thou? or from whence in heaven above?—
Hast thou *seen* all the hidings of my shame,
My falls, and upward strivings from a child;
And stood beside me patiently, and mild,
A witness of the long repentance given
From God forgiving to the man forgiven?

In this wide world am I thy only charge?—
And art thou moving on the heavenly stairs,
To bear aloft my half-unutter'd prayers,
And bring down blessings from the Father's throne
In mercy, grace, and peace?—Then not alone,
O not alone, though lonely, can I be
In all life's spaces fair and large,
In silence sitting, or when roaming free!—

Hast thou had other souls in bygone years,
Like me, to gently tend?—
And hast thou led them safe through sighs and tears
Unto the placid end,
Where sins and sorrows cease to have their power;
And rest from labour brings the holy dower
Of works, that ever in the wake of love
Do follow, from sure faith their birth to prove?

I do not know thee yet as I shall know:
But as some almoner from Christ my King
I think to greet thee gladly.—
Yet His, not thine, the praises that I sing,
To Him, not thee, with humble vows I go,
When my heart faints within me sadly.
'Tis He, not thou, my nature deigns to wear,
And all its weighty sympathies to bear!

Yes, Holy Son of God, yet very man,
Dear as man is to man and angels dear
To those they fondly guard from evil fear,
Thine is the heart that beats for human grief,
(I know not how)—and Thine the love that can,
Unsearchable, alone, bring pure relief
To heavy-laden souls among all sinners chief!

Within this outer court of flesh and blood
There is a temple: 'tis a "holy place,"
Which sensual pride and worldly thoughts deface
Too often; while the speech of witless men
And deeds unsaintly mar the secret good.—
There too the writings of some wiser mind
Bring incense, and a silent entrance find
For angels' converse, in some tranquil glen,
Or words of pious hearts, or prayers of souls refined.

But in that "holy place," more sacred still,
The inmost shrine of our immortal will,
God's throne, is set.—There spirit with spirit lives,
And all the Godhead His own Presence gives.—
No image there of jealousy, no shade
Of dark desire may reach what God has made
For God alone! Avaunt, ye thinkings ill,
And subtle wishes of the serpent old
E'en here, as once in Eden, for sacrilege too bold.—

Dear Saviour, Thou art God.—Then in this heart
Of my deep heart, this inmost self of me,

Claim Thine own seat — and rule supreme,
alone!
While holy angels bear their loving part
With holy men, and children pure and meek;
Till, through the graces of Thy Spirit grown
In heart more pure, the Father's face I see—
And in Thine unveil'd glory my true likeness seek!

LAUS DEO.

Ode to Christ.

PREFACE.

THOU givest to the soaring lark
His flood of sunny song:
And to the thrush from morn to dark
Those notes so clear and strong:

Thou givest to the nightingale
His many-voicèd lay,
A blithesome tale or sorrow's wail
To traveller sad or gay:

Thou givest to the robin's throat
To cheer the fall of leaf;
And to the wren a sprightlier note
Of gladness quick and brief:

And to all birds of varied wing
Thou givest, Lord, their voice;
And biddest each his message bring,
And in Thy works rejoice.—

Then let me, lowly though I be,
My humble lay present;
Nor cease to find in praising Thee
This fond heart's calm content.

PART I.

O Saviour, Thou art wholly mine
In every word and work of Thine,
In all the passion of Thy sacred heart
Thou givest me my life-sustaining part.

I rob not others; Thou, dear Lord,
To every soul art all in all:
By all in common faith adored,
To each Thou comest at his silent call,

Theirs wholly; and yet wholly mine:
By those still months mysterious nine,
While in the womb Thy holy frame
Was fashion'd to a human name;

By that rare birth, of angels sung,
As o'er the shepherd band they hung;
And midnight with unwonted glory,
Heard the glad prelude of Thy story;

By those first drops of infant blood,
Shed as in foretaste of Thy Rood,
When that blest Name to sinners dear
Fell on Thy mother's wondering ear;

By those long days of hasty flight
From murderous Herod's tyrant might,
When Egypt, as in times of yore,
Took God's first-born but to restore;

By Thy meek childhood's lone annoys
'Mid heedless guilt of girls and boys,
While prescient griefs did stain the glee
Of holiest innocence in Thee;

By that self-dedication sought
Within Thy Father's awful court,
When wisdom more than mortal years
Woke in the Jewish conclave fears;

By all those silent toils of youth
Which hallow'd since to honest truth
The labours of industrious care
And made rough workmen passing fair;

By Jordan's deep baptismal bed,
By the Dove's mission on Thy head,
And that Voice daughter from above
Which told for aye the Father's love;

By the Great Spirit's leading might
Through many a day and weary night
Till Moses' and Elijah's fast
In conflict strong Thou didst outlast;

O Teacher of our souls apart,
O Healer of each broken heart,
O Worker still unheard, unseen,
Where sin's and sorrow's stains have been,

Be mine; be theirs who love Thy name;
Be ours who all Thy grace proclaim:
Look on the dying and the dead,
On all, on each, Thy peace to shed.

LAUS DEO.

PART II.

Set up Thy cross, O crucified,
Within my heart:
Let thoughts and wishes kneel aside,
And bear their part,
Like that sad throng on Calvary,
Where loving women wept,
And with pierced soul the Virgin mother nigh
Her tearful vigil kept;

When from the darken'd glory of Thy shame,
To him, most near Thy breast
At the Last Supper, now there came
A voice of fond behest,
"Behold thy Mother!"—So she went
To that disciple's home,
Henceforth her son in Thy calm love's intent,
No more to roam.

Set up Thy cross, O crucified,
Within my heart:
For sins of mine, alas, applied
The bitterest smart

To that torn body on th' accursèd tree:
And wove that thorny crown,
And drew the anguish of Thy soul from Thee,
Thy bleeding form adown,

What time the sackcloth of the midday sun
Told his Creator's grief:
Ere yet God's wrath Thy Passion had outrun,
Or man had brought relief
To those parch'd lips.—O, deeds of mine,
Words, thoughts, and wishes,—all
Did work Thy woe! Then let that cross of Thine
My wrongful will appal.

Dead Lord of life—let my heart's rock
Be now Thy tomb:
And from the world's rude shock,
In this cold room,
Rest: for my sorrows and my care,
In prescient sympathies
Whilome Thy tender heart did bear,
And men's inhuman lies.

No alabaster box have I,
No unguents sweet and rare,
Nor shroud to offer, O Most High,
Of linen fine and fair.

But in this heart let all my faults
Lie buried now with Thee.—
From evil foes, and sin's assaults,
In death so make me free.

Dead Lord of Life, I sacrifice
To Thine all-conquering grave
The living power of every vice
From which Thou diedst to save!
Here in the charnel of a broken heart
The elder self lies dead,
That my new man may, quicken'd, start
From grief's repentant bed,—

To rise with Thee, triumphant King,—
And risen, ever more to stand,
And standing to that cross to cling,
Which makes each clime a holy land;
And sweetens every bitter wave
That fills the cup of human life;
And nerves the patience of the brave,
And calms the storm of folly's strife.

O let me walk with Thee, Thou King of saints,
My risen Lord:—
Only Thy presence can with kind restraints
Free life afford!—

A willing captive, would I gladly be
Enchain'd by love;
And follow onward, where I cannot see,
Thy mystic Dove.

My grosser senses cannot find Thee out:
Too much of earth
Clings round me still, and shadows with dark doubt
My second birth;
And yet by deepest sacramental ties
The hidden life survives;
While with the risen Lord the outward dies
The inner upward strives.

O that I had dove's wings to flee away
Where Thou art gone on high,
Ascended Saviour, to th' eternal day
Above this changeful sky!
There in the bosom of thy love to rest
Apart from sin and shame,
Clothed in Thy beauty for my own, and blest
With some new secret name!

But Thou art in thy glory, glorious Lord.
Thy beams the sun outshone,
When Syria's sky on Saul of Tarsus pour'd
That blinding light alone.

Dread King of Glory, who may see Thy face,
Where all Heaven's lightnings lie;
Before whose splendour seraphs from their place
Bow down adoringly?

But O how lovely was the milder ray
That rested on the brow
Of Thy first martyr on the gospel way,
Track'd since by blood till now!
He saw Thee standing, and from that pure gaze
Caught his loved Master's light.
Sudden they look'd with angry dark amaze:
He stood as angel bright:

Reflected love from the dear heart of God
Shone in his dying eyes:
For he had trod the path his Saviour trod
And traced it to the skies.
Jesu, kind Master, mercy have on me;
And let Thy gentler aspect calm my breast,
Till led from grace to grace at last I see
Thy brightest glory in God's perfect rest!

LAUS DEO.

Christ on the Waters.

A VISION.

I saw a Boy upon the salt sea wave,—
He was but little;—yet so calm and brave!—
Floating He seem'd: and as He floated on
A whisper fell my listening heart upon
"Follow thou Me."

And ever as I look'd, that infant Boy
Grew into larger childhood; and a joy
Dimpled the circling waters 'neath His gaze
While a voice came across the briny ways
"Follow thou Me."

And then I seem'd to follow, as a child
Looks to another for his guidance mild:
And as I follow'd still He larger grew
To take my form of youth; and spake anew
"Follow thou Me."

Then in His manhood walking pure and bright
He shed o'er life's dark storms a holy light.
And 'mid the tumults of the angry sea
I heard Him calling where His path should be
"Follow thou Me."

He stood; and where He stood the wave was
stay'd
And the wild winds a sudden calm allay'd;
As when the surging crowd, its fury spent,
Unlearns in silence what its clamours meant,
And melts away

Leaving the great space empty.—From His face
There beam'd the glory of Almighty grace
While, still in front, the laggard soul to cheer,
He bade me for the dangers far or near
Feel no dismay.

Onward He goes, in human form divine,
And tracks a pathway through the troubled brine;
I cannot choose but follow where He leads
Who sees my failing strength and all my needs
From day to day.

I know Thee who Thou art, for once of old
What time the Galilean fisher, bold
In untried courage, dared th' uncertain walk
To meet Thee on the billows, Thou didst talk
As man to man,

And with sustaining hand outstretch'd to prove
His fault of faith and all Thy strength of love,
Thou bad'st him come, and as he went he grew
More steadfast till the might of God he knew
In man for man!—

I know Thee who Thou art, for Thou didst sleep
Rock'd on the billows of the inland deep
In the toss'd vessel.—Beautiful Thy rest,
Calm as an infant on his mother's breast!
O weary head,

O bleeding heart, O toil-worn hands and feet!
I know Thee, Son of God—Thy presence sweet
Still'd those rough winds, and smoothed beneath
Thy keel
Those madden'd waves: in murmurs low they
steal,
And own the dread

Of that unearthly chiding, Peace, be still!
So canst Thou yet souls terror-stricken fill
With a strange virtue, and the storms allay
Of life's rough passage till they sink away
In placid rest.

E'en as the vessel on a sudden found
After long labourings the wish'd-for bound,
So dost Thou help the saintly soul to see
By some swift transit, if Thy will it be,
Its haven blest.

Speak, mighty Son of God!—I hear Thy voice
Bidding sad hearts 'mid sighs and tears rejoice,—
Call through the mist of error sinners home,
Say to the wills of men distraught "I come
And bring you rest."

LAUS DEO.

The Divine Potter.

THERE is a Potter, whom I seem to see,
Not with the vision of a mortal sight,
But through the dimness of His blinding light.
He hath a mighty wheel of strong decree,
And still, unworking, worketh silently,
Shrouded in depths of glory infinite.

There are His myriad vessels, small and great;
The myriad earths and sands and varied clays,
Wherewith are moulded into strange estate,
The same, yet ever differing through their days,
Vessels for honour or for meaner use.
And not the wayward will nor fond abuse
Of gifted powers availing may withstand
Th' exact conception of that Holy Hand.

And there is One beside Him, high above
All other vessels in the Father's love.
Moulded Himself of earth, yet moulding all
Ere earth was form'd: but by the human Fall
Link'd into one with man, as into one
With God before Creation had begun,
At once "the Son of man" and God's own equal Son.

This vessel full of grace is overflowing
Into those other vessels as they stand
Ready from that Life-fountain to receive
The generous influence of the Spirit, growing
Into a larger stream as men believe,
And breathe the airs of Heaven's far-hidden land
In love's own atmosphere so pure and bland!—

And ever as the Father from His will
Doth fashion unto life each vessel true,
So ever doth the Son in love fulfil
The wondrous meanings of the wise design;
Uttering our human story line by line,
While still from age to age He maketh old things new.

Some are rough pitchers of thick earthenware,
But fitter thus the common toil to bear:
And in them often from Christ's holy well
Water is drawn for others,
Parents and strangers friends or brothers,
To slake the thirst of souls, how many who can tell?

Some are as vases of a finer mould,
Translucent—and too brittle for the bold,—

In these the incense of the secret prayer
Stays fragrant; while the outward surface fair
Adorns the deserts of our human life,
Remote from busy marts, and noise of civil strife.

And there are some for varied labour strong
Yet beautiful of form in shape and size.
To these the uses of the world belong,
Where rumour spreads her tales of public wrong,
Or, 'mid the throng of wealth and grandeur, sighs
The full heart's sorrow of the lonely wise.—

And I have seen the little cups that bear
A cool fresh draught to some poor fainting heart,—
So in the griefs of life to hold a part,
And take their lessons of soul-healing art
From the dear Christ's undying watchful care,
'Mid all the fairest of our kind most fair.

One after one these lovely vessels fail
By rent and fissure, or by stress of days,
And ever as they fail remains the tale
Of each in service due and righteous ways;

How this, or that, the glorious Master took,
And wrought His patterns from the Holy Book
Into their substance, true in thought and look.—

Are we then of those vessels, I and thou,
Haply frail porcelain, or a harder clay?
Hast thou the living water springing now
In the deep soul? Or does the sacred ray
Shine from the face of Jesus through thine earth,
Bewraying so the treasures of thy heavenly birth?

Shine, Son of Man, with Thine own Godlike light
Through our dull clay, and make our darkness bright,
Use, Son of God, these vessels for Thy will;
And in each soul Thy wondrous love fulfil.

LAUS DEO.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.—*Heb. xiii.* 8.

In that beginning ever unbegun;
Ere Time had learnt the courses of the night
Or day's sweet changes; ere the silver orb
Had marshall'd months and seasons to their turn;
The Word Divine, in the dear heart of God,
Eternal and unchanging, Love in Love,
Dwelt, and pure Life in Life.
Forgive, great Lord,
These lispings of a babe, when he essays
To think in words on Thee,—albeit far
From uttering all the meditative soul
Feels, if to feel be somewhat.—Fill my mind,
O Thou blest Spirit, who in counsel Three
Yet One in will and act, art ever near
To abide in all Thy fulness in the breasts
Of men, created by Thy Sovereign Power;
And, fallen since, by Thine unswerving love
Redeem'd; and re-ennobled through the gift
Of that indwelling Presence. Leave us not,
Though through long ages of this failing earth
Tempted, and much by evil ways provoked!—

How shall I speak of yesterday?—from whence
Date its first spring?—In Eden's garden, sad
With shame unwonted, when the guilty pair
Heard but to flee the Voice erewhile beloved,
Thou wert the same in love, in grace benign;—
In counsel with the Father and the Spirit
Pleading our respite on th' eternal oath
Of priesthood promised ere the world began!—

O, Thou didst walk the garden, Son of God,
And smite the conscience of our earliest race
With pangs of dread, unchanged Thyself in care
For the weak fledglings of Thy Father's Spirit.—

It is a lengthen'd yesterday to those
Who in their fleeting generations come
And soon depart, as in the forest glade
Leaves burst and spread their shadows, and again
Fall on the earth to part with their sweet lives,
While others yearly in their place ascend.—
And yet to dying men long yesterdays
Are granted, as they trace th' unnumber'd hours
From childhood to old age; and mapp'd distinct
See with the inward vision all their life,
Shadow and sunlight, changes manifold,
Sorrows and joy, or good with evil blent,
Sins and their cure, remedial penitence.—

So ageing years the days of youth recall,
And through his midday dream the old man lives
Far back into the past. The childish pleasure
Pleases again; this game, that bounding leap,
Or some bright posy gather'd with neat care
To deck a mother at her evening meal;
Then the first struggles with a rugged world,
Defeats and triumph.—All the moving past
Steals on the brain like some dissolving scene
Clear and then lost to sense. This godlike gift
Tells of our higher birthright.—We can think,
And, thinking on for ever, still renew
The dead into the living present.—

Slain
From this old world's foundation, Lamb of God,
Thy yesterday, as in a mighty scroll
Unrolls the story of degenerate man,
As one by one each patriarch stretch'd his length
Of days to years nine hundred; "and he died,"
All but the one who walk'd so close with God
The "and he died" befell not: but he went,
Released from prophet toils, straight home to
Thee!
Then came that flood of guilt, rebellion dire,
Hurling the billows of presumptuous rage
Like the sea's angry surge against the sky

Of Thy calm watchful providence of love:
Till Thou didst ope the sluices of the deep
And heaven's wide firmament on human pride;
And with baptismal deluge cleanse the world.
Then didst Thou span our renovated earth,
And write Thy love afresh upon the clouds,
Unchanging; for that seven-tinted arch
In three fair colours tells of One in Three
For ever, as to-day and yesterday, the same!

But Thy long yesterday, O Son of God,
Unfolds a people in the barren womb
Of her, whose laughter, half in unbelief
And half in joy, brought back her fertile youth,
Mother henceforth of nations.—Thou didst yearn
Over that infant people, cradled first
In Syria; then in Egypt's iron rule
Harden'd to sorrow; then in deserts wild
Led forty murmuring years, rebellious still
And still repenting; till the promised land
Received the remnant in full numbers great.—
O groves and mountains of fair Palestine,
O rocks and caverns and uncertain streams,
Grey olives, and the oleander'd banks
Of headlong Jordan, rapid now and strong
Now spreading far on either side, or shrunk
Within the narrower ledges of his verge;

Ye well can say how that long-favour'd race,
Like to some wayward child, believed and loved;
Then, in unloving disbelief, refused
The gracious yoke of Heaven's Eternal King;
Choosing the shadow of a mortal prince
Before the Rock of Ages!
Ah! My God,
Thy yesterday records a long-drawn tale
Of shameless guilt, while prophet and seer alike
Rebuked th' insensate populace.—Thy calf,
Samaria, and, Jerusalem, thy gods,
Silver and gold and wood and stone, bewrayed
The ingrain'd folly of old Jacob's seed.
Meanwhile from age to age thy Holy One
Sent servant after servant, "rising early
And sending" one by one, or sometimes many,
In vain.—But they are gone—and children's hands,
Pollute with sins, have built the sepulchres
Of those their fathers slew, till sin prevail'd
To slay the Prince of Life, that Love might prove
For ever, as to-day and yesterday, the same!

And art Thou still "the same," dear Son of man
Since that great dawn which saw th' Incarnate God
Clothed in our garments of frail mortal flesh?

The same, as when the pre-existent glory
Blazed in the bush?—or, when Isaiah saw
The vision of thrice-holy Majesty
And felt th' uncleanness of his purest lips?
Or when the captive prophet first beheld
The "dreadful" wheels, and that uplifted throne
Of Cherubim, and still above there sat
A rainbow-gloried Presence, undefined?—
Or when the "man of loves" in visions knew
Folded in clouds before th' Eternal Light
One like a Son of man, beneath whose rod
The great world empires shall for ever fall?—
How couldst Thou veil that awful radiance
Rock'd on a mother's lap? How walk the earth
Like one of us, nor with Thy mighty tread
Affright the mountains into flight, and burst
The strong rocks from their everlasting hills?
How couldst Thou bring that "Voice of many waters"
Down to the gentle whisper of a child,
Or to the gracious comfort of a word
Spoken to soothe the mourner, or to heal
A fever'd frame? How suffer pain and tears,
And learn obedience unto death and shame,
Thyself the while the living Lord of Life,
The King of Glory, by all angels own'd
In adoration falling at Thy feet?

All through this great to-day, as centuries close,
And cycles still return upon their round,
Art Thou the same, the One to set Thine Hand
Upon the throne of God and every human heart?

It must be so; else where the hopes of man?
What light may guide us through the shoals of time?
What anchor save from out the refluent tide?
Dear Son of man and yet the Mighty God,
Thy twofold nature hath the power, alone
Unchanging 'mid the flux of human lives,
To bind the fleeting ages of the world
Into one sure to-day, the time of grace,
The time of grand redemption, marching on
From shore to shore where'er this sun of ours
Rises or sets beneath encircling seas!—
Therefore we gaze upon Thee year by year,
And watch Thee from Thy cradle to the cross,
Trace Thy calm manhood in its awful truth,
Hear Thy strong cry and agonising prayer,
Sit by Thy grave, or lift th' adoring eye
To track Thy glory's chariot in the skies.—
Therefore we own the city of our God,
With strong foundations surely laid in Thee,
As, day by day, her sacred walls are built
With hearts of men cemented by Thy Spirit.

O wondrous walls, O living stones so fair,
Wrought by Thy various workings into one!—
No marble palace where the eye discerns
Nor joint nor meeting-edges of the work;
No famed mosaic of Italian art
Pieced into patterns of one sure design,
Can match the living unity of souls,
From age to age, in every clime and tongue,
Moulded, and set around the gates of praise.

Behold, in all the quarries of our kind,
Through the long ages of Thy vast to-day,
The same in love, in wisdom, and in truth,
Thou carvest stone by stone: apostles first
And martyrs, and the suffering host of saints
Met in a dungeon, or some hidden loft,
To break in Thy sweet name the holy bread:
Then in the windings of the burrow'd rock,
Where life in Thee proclaim'd the death of sin,
And secret bonds of worship knit in one
The living with the dead through those dark miles
Of galleries underground: by quiet streams,
Or in lone deserts, or on mountain crag
Hunted from men: or in self-chosen state
Of outward desolation; or in vales
Secluded from the lust of sword and fire:—

From out the noise of war, and strife of tongues,
Or angry storms of railing impotence,
Silent Thy work has grown—and groweth still;
Like some far seen cathedral, which demands
The toil of ages, while the stately aisle
To aisle is added, and th' enlarging pile
Gathers the towers, the buttress and the spires
Into one solemn whole: nor less beyond
The chantries and the chapels take a place
Later or early in the vast design!—

Therefore, O mighty Mason, and of men
Chief Master-builder, we that end await,
Patient in silent awe, which shall unfold
Th' unerring aim of Thy Eternal Mind.
We see not yet the gracious unity,
Still long'd for; nor the methods comprehend
Which shall our parted interests combine
Of churches now at strife or seeming strife!
Enough for us that our High Priest hath pray'd,
And that the Father heareth: so Thy prayer
'Mid the wild scheming of divided minds
In all its deep intention is fulfilled.
But times are changing, and the thoughts of men
Change with them; and the larger light within
Spreads o'er the darkness of the past, disclosing
New marvels in Creation's Catholic Book,

And sacred depths in Revelation's Fount
Unfathom'd even now. Then let them come
These changes, as the rounding year returns
On its past seasons: we the while abide
Firm, stone by stone, on Heaven's Eternal Rock
For ever, as to-day and yesterday, the same.

LAUS DEO.

Rest after Labour.

Yes,—if we cannot work, if limbs do fail,
And the voice falter, and the eye grow dim;
If the ear cease to hear of joy or wail;
Yet we may lift the silent prayer to Him
Who loveth all.

Not all the bustle or the fuss of life
Is rëal work.—Men running to and fro
In search of wealth, or greatness in the strife
Of the world's wide success, may come and go,
May rise and fall,

But leave not always much for after good!—
Age unto age from out the storied past
Has left its treasures of some mental food
In gifts of science or of art, that last
To memory dear;

And, ever old, their freshness still renew,
To bind the present with the ancient day;
Yet of the many there remain but few
That aid the struggling pilgrim on his way
Of hope and fear.—

But who can tell of all that seemeth lost
How much is gather'd into other lives,
Or taken where some nature lacketh most,
Or fashion'd, when the fated hour arrives,
To rare design?

Seest thou the lichen, that on mouldering wall
Drinks the long rains, till in its cushion grey
Some straggling herb grows upward thin and tall,
Which in its turn shall yield its life's short day
To plants more fine?

Then follows the large tree, some forest king,
That, fed by death of others in the soil,
Stands in its strength, and from its bole doth fling
Branches around, and all th' umbrageous spoil
Of leaf and bough;

Till man, the worker, lops with axe and saw
And man, the artist, turns, in various plan,
The growth of centuries, planks without a flaw,
To polish'd chair, or wainscot wide of span,
Or rustic plough.—

So are the words of men, and deeds of care,
And thoughts from off the anvil of the mind,
Like sparks that fail, and failing on the air
Leave yet the substance of their light behind,—
To be forgot!

Forgot of man: but not of heaven's high King!—
With Him nor loss can be, nor any waste,
For wisdom out of losses gain doth bring,
And wrest from ruin what did seem effaced
In man's poor lot.—

Then if we cannot work, if limbs do fail
And the voice falter, and the eye grow dim;
If the ear cease to hear of joy or wail,
Yet we may lift the silent prayer to Him
Who loveth all!

What time the warrior psalmist, far from court
Of heathen lord, or Israel's sacred tent,
Wept o'er the ashes of his home, report
Telling of plunder'd lives, and labour spent,
Beyond recall:

While grief of men in sullen murmurs broke
For wives and children stolen far away;
He bade them bravely meet the cruel stroke
Of war unholy, and not idly stay
Their wrath to fan,

But following fast o'ertake th' unguarded host,
And all the losses by quick march regain—
They heard; they hurried through the southward coast;
And found the spoil repay them all their pain.—
The godless clan

Of Belial spake an evil speech of hate:
"Two hundred came not with us to the fray,
But faintly chose to shun the battle's fate:
Let them not share with us our joy to day,
Content to weep."

But he the leader, great in truth and wit,
Forbad the mischief of the wrongful heart.
"Not less the watchers by the stuff who sit
Than they who march'd to battle have their part;
And their rank keep.

"We give them back their own, and, with their own,
Of all, that while they watch'd we fought and won,
The portion due to prayers and wishes, known
To God our King—His be the word 'Well done'
For each and all"—

Not less in gospel toils of Christian men,
Far spread o'er distant lands and seas untried,
Some part is claim'd of those who send, and then,
For others prayerful, in their homes abide
To watch at call.

Then if we cannot work, if limbs do fail,
And the voice falter and the eye grow dim,
If the ear cease to hear of joy or wail,
Yet we may lift the silent prayer to Him
Who loveth all!—

LAUS DEO.

Adieu.

THE land of sad farewells,
The earth, whose fleeting joys
Are like to funeral bells
Over bright girls and boys!

The land where all must part;
The earth, that fades away,
And tells to the broken heart
That never one may stay!

The land that sinks beneath
A shoreless, timeless, sea:
The earth, where crown and wreath
Of youth and age shall flee!

The land, where all must die,
And leave the memoried home:
The earth where each must lie
Until the day of doom!

Yet o'er that mournful land
There broods a blessed thought,
The holy Saviour's hand
Hath hope and comfort brought:

And on this ageing earth
God's Son did deign to dwell;
He knew dear childhood's mirth
And sorrow's tearful well.

And though His beauteous feet
Our fields no longer tread,
His Name like ointment sweet
In fragrance far is spread.

That Name can bring relief
To many a lonely breast,
And lull the mourner's grief
Into its holy rest.

In that high Name of power
Life wins her way through death;
And in her sunset hour
Sweetens the latest breath.

Then, broken prayers may charm
The dying lips to smile:
And e'en the grave alarm
Of watching care beguile;

Where faith and hope achieve
The final fruit of love;
And angel wings receive
The parting soul above!

LAUS DEO.

The Millhead—Fetcham.

STILL waters, that in calm repose
Spread your soft bosom to the sky,
While fast the turbid river flows
Beyond the mill that standeth nigh;

What, though the panting engine whirls
Its harness'd cars with smoking trail,
As hour by hour the city hurls
Her crowded life across the vale:—

Or should the noisy village send
Carriage and cart along the way,
And thousand sounds from either end
Affright the silence of the day:—

Yet here a placid scene divides
The hubbub of the busy crew,
Where the lone pathway skirts the sides
Of the clear lakelet in our view.

And here the swans in graceful pride
Their ivory wings for sails uprear:
Their arching shadows as they glide
Traced in the waters smooth and clear.—

And here the coots with sudden dive
Fetch from the wave their wonted food;
Or shrill their joy the while they strive
To shape their floating homes of wood.—

Nor less the ducks the weeds to eat
Their downward fronts but half submerge;
And upward ply their paddling feet
Amid the herbage near the verge—

And dabchicks, scudding here and there
With their soft plumage plump and round,
Dart at the insects in the air,
Nor waken on the pool a sound:—

And in the midst the sallows rank
Weave their lithe branches in and out
To form an island cool and dank,
A fortress for the feathered rout.—

Calm scene of happy life within
The fretful ranges of our kind,
Still undisturb'd by all the din
Of country and of town combined!—

Here meditation still may rest,
On some bright day, her pensive eye;
And hold an hour of converse blest
With all the shadows of the sky.

Here may she see reflected deep
The heaven's deep blue in silent gaze;
Or watch the clouds that seem to sleep
Down in the pool's responsive haze.

And *here* the stars of sacred night
Steal through the darkness, one by one;
And in the waters dip their light
Till the pale moon her course has done.—

But sometimes may a breeze arise
To fret the surface of the lake,
Till from its laughing wave the skies
And shadows all the ripples take.

O tranquil soul, O lonely heart,
Amid the fuss of fashion's days,
Thou seemest here to bear a part
In silence far from human ways!

And, like the surface of the pool,
 Reflecting what is passing o'er
Of joy or grief, in sage or fool,
 And customs of our social lore ;

Unruffled in the calm of ease,
 Thou liest still, thou liest still ;—
Or if rough manners should displease,
 And mar the beauty of thy will,

'Tis but the ripple of a wave
 That stirs the well-spring of thy life,
Then sinks in sudden peace to save
 The inward man from envy's strife !—

Be mine to count each placid hour
 Of secret wisdom every day :
And learn in sober thoughts the power
 To win a soul from folly's sway !—



Early Poems.



Early Poems.

Rural Sounds.

SWEET the lone hours beneath an azure sky,
Where clouds float slowly by!
And sweet the moments cull'd from days that fly
Far from rude revelry!

O holy calm, while sunbeams pour a ray
Unsullied through the day;
And all the blossoms of the artless May
In twinkling dalliance play;—

When winds would whisper, but are softly laid
Ere yet a sound is made;
When suns would burn, but straight are taught to fade
Beneath the young leaf's shade!

Let us sit down, and nature's solace use,
In listless calm to muse.—
Unwitting ye, who such a peace refuse
And earth's brief heaven lose !—

Let us sit down, here on the flowery mound
Of others most unfound,
And listen, while we sit, to what soft sound
Comes, stealing o'er the ground ;

Unheard of others.—Ah ! for us 'tis sent,
Some chime of nature, lent
To cheer our souls, within clay temples pent ;
As once to thee it went

Adam, first made of mortals ; while it told
Thy spirit, pure of old,
That not the world the Infinite may hold
To boundless view unroll'd.—

* * * * *

It speaks a thousand voices.—'Tis the dash
Of waters, that with flash
Of sunlit spray, from beetling cliffs do clash,
Their kindred wave to lash.

It speaks in sudden breaths, that sway the bough
In grove or shrubbery low;
Whilst the kind air, that soothes our eager brow,
Is yet unmoved to blow.—

It is the honey'd murmur of the bee,
Or gnats, which as they flee
On sunbeams dance; and further them we see
Wind their light bugles free.

It is the harmony of myriad birds;
The voice of lowing herds!—
Earth's utterance, that speaks in more than words;
In woods, in waves, in birds.

It is the bleatings of the winding flock
Along some pastured rock;
Or, now and then, the tinkling bells that mock
The chime of village clock.—

It is the sigh of trembling leaves 'mid air,
Faint zephyrs' early care,
When wondering at the stilly calmness there
They lisp each other fair.—

It is the voice of myriad living things:
Earth's gentle bosom rings
With mirth of nations, which on tiny wings
From out her womb she flings.

Yes, 'tis the voice of life's mysterious joy
Without our world's alloy;
Where the sweet day dream, like a maiden coy,
May soothe and not annoy.

Rest, weary heart; and let thine inward ear
Draw in the message clear;
God speaks in all He makes, for man to hear,
"A God not far but near."

Summer Moonlight.—A Fragment.

"Tacitæ per amica silentia lunæ."—VERG. *Æn.*

I WELL remember me
When the soft moonlight, shed through fleecy clouds,
Pierced my lone lattice; and the nightly lamp
Of vesper, 'mid the dark deep haze of heaven
Stood, like a lowly handmaid to the moon
In queenly splendour; while the cypress pale
Was silver'd with the calm and placid sheen
Heaven spread o'er silent earth; and scarce the breeze
Did rouse it from its fitful slumbrous rest
To wake the quiverings of some airy leaf;
Yet now and then, as shamed of drowsiness,
It would arise to stir the topmost crown
Of the tall cedar; then it died away
Into that still and solitary sadness
Which broods o'er midnight and her noiseless hours.—
Such is the peace of earth; dear nature's peace,
When all unwitting of the past she lies
Steeped in her calm repose;—

When night has drawn her mantle, and each thing
Rests from its daily harmonies of life.
Ah, then we muse in silence, undisturbing
The slumbrous scene! Then with ourselves we think
That such chaste light is all too pure for man,
And all too good that blessedness of quiet
For souls unhallow'd by the breath of God!—
We cannot choose but in deep awe to gaze
Out on the silent earth, and silent heavens;
While the mute landscape from each voiceless range
Speaks in its very silence to the heart
A "Peace, be still."—Nor dare we break the spell
E'en by that sweetest voice to holy men
Of sweet companionship!

Quietude.

AN IDYLL FROM MOSCHUS.

When the breeze a rippling motion
 Waking aye anon is heard
O'er the glassy face of ocean,
 Straight my timid heart is stirr'd:
No more the land is dear to me
But the calm, the placid sea.

Yet oft as moans the hoary deep
And foamy billows o'er it sweep,
Curling far their monstrous host,
All my looks are tow'rds the coast,
I'm longing then for the distant tree
Away away from the briny sea!

Dear then to me the friendly shore,
 And sweet the forest's darkening glade:
There let the gusty wild winds roar
 Yet whispers still the pine tree's shade.
Oh, hard the life of the fisherman's doom!
His crazy barque is all his home:

And all his toil the barren main,
And the wandering fish his simple gain!
Be mine in slumber sweet to lie
 Underneath the greenwood tree,
With a gentle streamlet babbling by
 To soothe, not frighten, such as me!

Love in Penitence.

"Quicquid erat medicæ vicerat artes amor."—TIB.

A BALLAD.

FABLED Love with flagging wing,
Weary of the noonday's length,
On his mother's lap did fling
All his childly weight of strength.

Much the heat had brought him low,
Quench'd his fiery spirit's pride:
Now his breathings were but slow,
Moving scarce his languid side.

Soon the tear bedew'd his cheek,
Then he heaved the fitful sigh;
All was calm and seeming meek,
'Neath that placid burning eye.

Then he told a tale of grief,
Whisper'd in his mother's ears:
Sorrow finds a cold relief
Where the willing partner hears.

"I have roved, in labours vain,
Mid the bowers of every part;
Wrought the poison's tedious pain
In the lady's bleeding heart.—

"I have touch'd the virgin's brow
With a whiteness pale as death:
Taught the fervid youth to bow,
Fetter'd off his failing breath.

"I have scann'd the ocean waste;
Sportive plied the oary barque:
While the lonely seaboy paced,
Closed his eyes in slumbers dark:

"Then I wreck'd the watchless crew
'Neath the briny, briny, wave.—
Thus, alas, too late they knew
Love was not the thing to save!—

"I have wafted maiden's sobs
To her fond suspicious spouse:—
Now his heart with anger throbs;
Now he dreams of broken vows.

"Scarce a year I yoked a pair—
'Twas an idle, idle, freak.
She was dark, but he was fair
As the snows on Eryx peak.

"Smooth her raven hair was set,
Down her neck the tresses fell:
Stars her eyes of brilliant jet,
Matching such dark beauty well.

"His were waving locks of gold:
Eyes of deep and liquid blue;
Yet his brow bespoke the bold,
One that toil and peril knew.

"As I mark'd the graceful pair
Met beneath an Indian grove,
Envy brought me jealous care
While I thought to 'wake their love

"On the feathery palm tree's crown
Perch'd as bird of omen ill;
Straight I aim'd an arrow down
Charged with all my reckless will.

" Pierced the shaft the maiden's breast :—
Youth, 'twas kinder to thy skin !—
She nor pleasure knew nor rest,
But would strive his heart to win.

" He would coldly yield his hand :
Coldly sigh his plighted breath,
For her sake the Indian strand
Should his country be to death.

" But my dart was poison'd deep
With the milk of faithless plants.—
Then he left her lone to weep,
Left her lone to dying wants.

" 'Twas not for my will enough,
But I sped him o'er the sea :
O'er the billows wild and rough
Thousand leagues full travell'd he.

" Mother, now to thee returning,
I am weary of the strife :
Fain I would 'mid sorrows burning
Give thee back my wayward life.—

"I had thought that others' pain
Might to me some pleasure prove;
Dream'd their loss might be a gain
To thy truant, heartless Love.

"But I find myself undone
By the pangs of others known;
When I dream my mirth is won
Straight the gladdening hope is flown.—

"I have learnt the lesson late,
I have learnt,—'tis sorrow's song,—
His indeed a joyless fate
Who would work another wrong!"

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